

STATE OF MACOMB COUNTY ADDRESS

**NANCY M. WHITE, CHAIR
MACOMB COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARCH 11, 2004**

WELCOME!

IT'S GOOD TO SEE SO MANY FRIENDS HERE TODAY.

I'D LIKE TO ASK MY COLLEAGUES ON THE BOARD TO STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED. AND SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO COMMISSIONER JOAN FLYNN WHO WILL SOON BECOME PRESIDENT OF SEMCOG! GOOD FOR YOU!

THIS YEAR, I'M GOING TO BEGIN THE STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY. I THINK THIS IS FITTING BECAUSE OF THE WAR WE ARE STILL FIGHTING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD. IT IS FITTING BECAUSE OUR SOLDIERS LIVE AND DIE IN DAILY TREACHERY DEFENDING US AGAINST AN ENEMY WITH NEITHER A UNIFORM NOR A FLAG.

LET US BEGIN TODAY BY REMEMBERING OUR MICHIGAN HEROES WHO HAVE DIED IN BATTLE IN IRAQ.

HERE TO READ THE NAMES OF THOSE WE'VE LOST IS COLONEL BOB JOHNSTON, COMMANDER OF SELFRIDGE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE.

HOLLY McGEOGH (TAYLOR)

STEVEN C. HATTAMER (GWINN)

ARMY MASTER SERGEANT WILLIAM L. PAYNE (OTSEGO)

ARMY STAFF SERGEANT BRETT J. PETRIKEN (FLINT)

ARMY CAPTAIN PAUL J. CASSIDY (LAINGSBURG)

ARMY SPECIALIST DONALD L. WHEELER (CONCORD)

ARMY SERGEANT TREVOR A. BLUMBERG (CANTON)

ARMY STAFF SERGEANT PAUL J. JOHNSON (CALUMET)

ARMY SPECIALIST ARTIMUS D. BRASSFIELD (FLINT)

ARMY STAFF SERGEANT MARK D. VASQUEZ (WATERFORD)

ARMY PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DAMIAN BUSHART (WATERFORD)

ARMY PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JASON G. WRIGHT (LUZERNE)

MARINE MAJOR KEVIN NAVE (formerly of WHITE LAKE)

ARMY SERGEANT MICHAEL F. PEDERSEN (formerly of FLINT)

ARMY SERGEANT TODD J. ROBBINS (HART)

AIR FORCE STAFF SERGEANT SCOTT SATHER (CLIO)

ARMY PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JASON MEYER (HOWELL)

MARINE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JUAN GARZA (TEMPERANCE)

ARMY SPECIALIST RICHARD A. GOWARD

ARMY SERGEANT SEAN REYNOLDS (EAST LANSING)

COLONEL JOHNSTON IS ALSO HERE TODAY REPRESENTING SELFRIDGE AND ITS NEARLY 350 ACTIVELY DEPLOYED MEMBERS OF THE 127TH WING AROUND THE GLOBE. PLEASE STAND TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND REMEMBER THOSE WE'VE LOST AND ALL OF OUR HEROES SACRIFICING SO MUCH TO PRESERVE THE PEACE AND PROSPERITY OF OUR DEMOCRACY.

AGAINST THE SOMBER BACKDROP OF WAR, IT IS A DIFFICULT TRANSITION TO THE EVERYDAY BUSINESS OF RUNNING THE COUNTY. BUT THAT IS OUR JOB AND THE BEST WAY TO SUPPORT OUR MEN AND WOMEN OVERSEAS IS TO DO IT *HONORABLY* AND TO DO IT *WELL*.

THEREFORE, I AM HAPPY TO REPORT TO YOU TODAY THAT THE STATE OF MACOMB COUNTY~ *THE HEART OF THE GREAT LAKES* ~ IS IN GOOD HEALTH AND HAS A GREAT PROGNOSIS!

LAST YEAR, I BEGAN MY REMARKS BY TALKING ABOUT HOMELAND SECURITY. WHILE WE ALL WISH IT WERE OTHERWISE, THE THREAT OF HOMELAND TERROR PERSISTS AND THE NEAR-TERM FORECAST IS NOT PROMISING.

HOWEVER, I BELIEVE WE, LIKE ALL AMERICANS, HAVE COME TO TERMS WITH THIS 'NEW NORM'. WE HAVE SEWN SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS AND AWARENESS INTO THE FABRIC OF OUR DAILY LIVES. SO I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU AN UPDATE ON WHERE THE COUNTY STANDS TODAY ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE.

LAST SUMMER WHEN THE BLACKOUT SWEPT THRU PARTS OF THE MIDWEST AND EAST COAST, COUNTY OFFICIALS 'KICKED INTO GEAR'. WE TURNED THAT UNWELCOMED, UNANTICIPATED EVENT INTO A KIND OF 'DRESS REHEARSAL' ~ A REAL-LIFE DRILL FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF SOMETHING MAN-MADE; QUITE POSSIBLY SOMETHING *MUCH MORE SERIOUS*.

UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, LOU MIODUSZEWSKI, I IMMEDIATELY ACTIVATED THE *EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (EOC)*. SHERIFF MARK HACKEL QUICKLY RESPONDED TO INITIATE AND SUPPORT EMERGENCY MEASURES. ADDITIONALLY, THE COUNTY DEPTS. OF HEALTH ~ FACILITIES & OPERATIONS ~ COMMUNITY SERVICES ~ MARTHA T. BERRY HOSPITAL ALONG WITH MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THE ROAD COMMISSION, OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND COMMUNITY BUSINESS LEADERS ALL PITCHED IN AND HUNG IN FOR TWO DAYS AND NIGHTS UNTIL THE PROBLEMS WERE SOLVED AND THE CRISIS PASSED. TODAY, I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND APPLAUD EVERYONE WHO WORKED SO DILIGENTLY ~ ESPECIALLY SO MANY OF OUR EMPLOYEES WHO WENT "ABOVE AND BEYOND" AND ALSO OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY WHO SO WILLINGLY AND GENEROUSLY RESPONDED TO CALLS FOR HELP.

FROM THAT EPISODE WE LEARNED TWO THINGS:

- SOME COUNTY SERVICES WORK WELL AND
- SOME COULD BE IMPROVED.

AND, SINCE LAST AUGUST, IMPROVEMENT HAS BEEN OUR PRIMARY FOCUS.

FOR EXAMPLE ~ WE LEARNED THAT THE *EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER* HAS TO BE CAPABLE OF MEETING MULTIPLE CRISIS NEEDS. IT HAS TO BE ADEQUATE IN SIZE AND

LOCATION AND BE EQUIPPED WITH CURRENT TECHNOLOGY. WE ALSO LEARNED *UNEQUIVOCALLY* THAT COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES HAVE NEVER BEEN *MORE CRITICAL*. WE MUST HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO COMMUNICATE *EFFECTIVELY* AND *RELIABLY* WITH ALL SEGMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY. *WE CAN SETTLE FOR NOTHING LESS.*

TO ASSURE THIS CAPABILITY, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS VOTED TO DEDICATE \$13.2 MILLION TO BEGIN THE RADIO TOWER CONSTRUCTION PHASE OF THE 800 Mhz INTER-OPERABLE RADIO SYSTEM. THIS PROJECT IS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION BY THE END OF 2005. ONCE OPERATIONAL, IT WILL ALLOW ALL COUNTY POLICE AND FIRE DEPTS. TO COMMUNICATE THROUGHOUT THE STATE BY WAY OF THE COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE ~ AND WILL HANDLE UP TO FIVE THOUSAND COMMUNITY RADIOS.

I ALSO WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPPORT OF OUR FEDERAL LEGISLATORS WHO ARE SEEKING A FEDERAL APPROPRIATION TO COMPLEMENT OUR SIGNIFICANT LOCAL COMMITMENT TO THIS PROJECT. THE FUNDS THEY ARE SEEKING COULD BE USED TO PROCURE EQUIPMENT FOR THE LOCAL POLICE, FIRE AND EMS 1ST RESPONDERS. THIS KIND OF COOPERATION IS THE LINCHPIN OF SUCCESS.

LOOKING AHEAD, THERE WILL BE TWO FULL SCALE EXERCISES THIS FALL INVOLVING GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY DEFENSE TO SAFEGUARD AGAINST ATTACK INVOLVING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION.

ADDITIONALLY, A FEMA SUPPLEMENTAL PLANNING GRANT OF \$37 THOUSAND DOLLARS HAS ALLOWED FOR THE CREATION AND PRINTING OF 249 THOUSAND COPIES OF A *CITIZENS' EMERGENCY PLANNING ADVISORY BOOKLET* TO HELP KEEP OUR RESIDENTS CURRENT. YOU MAY PICK UP A COPY ON YOUR WAY OUT.

OUR COUNTY-WIDE TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS UMBRELLA IS MANAGED BY CYNTHIA ZERKOWSKI, DIRECTOR OF "MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICES". I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE COUNTY'S FIBER OPTIC COMPUTER NETWORK WILL BE COMPLETED LATER THIS YEAR. AND, AS OF TODAY, IT WILL BE KNOWN AS MACnet. THANKS TO THE INVITATION OF MISD SUPERINTENDENT MIKE DEVAULT, WE ACHIEVED MAJOR COST SAVINGS BY PARTICIPATING WITH THE MACOMB INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT ON THIS

PROJECT. 104 MILES OF FIBER OPTIC CABLE WILL CONNECT 53 COUNTY GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS. ADDITIONALLY, UNDER THE PROGRAM, CABLE IS BEING STRUNG TO EVERY CITY HALL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE COUNTY. THE IMMEDIATE BENEFIT WILL BE A REDUCTION IN OPERATING COSTS TO OUR COMMUNITIES AND THEIR POLICE DEPARTMENTS FOR SUCH THINGS AS THE DIGITAL FINGERPRINTING SYSTEM AND ACCESS TO THE STATE'S LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM.

THIS COMPREHENSIVE THREE-YEAR APPROACH TO CRITICAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS WILL ALSO STRENGTHEN OUR CAPABILITIES IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM WHICH WILL BE INTEGRATED THROUGH TECHNOLOGY AND WILL MAKE ALL COURTS MORE EFFICIENT AND COST EFFECTIVE; VIDEO ARRAIGNMENT CAPABILITY IS JUST ONE PRACTICAL EXAMPLE.

THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS/BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE WILL ALSO FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THROUGH A \$100 THOUSAND DOLLAR PLANNING GRANT FROM THE STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP., THE COUNTY HAS COMPLETED ITS *LINKMICHIGAN LINKMACOMB* REPORT AND HAS ADOPTED ITS RECOMMENDATIONS. THESE DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE ON LINE. YOU CAN SEE THAT A REAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE IS TAKING SHAPE IN MACOMB COUNTY.

BUT, AS GREAT AS ALL THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY IS, IT WILL NEVER REPLACE PERSONAL, ONE-ON-ONE COMMUNICATION. I AM PLEASED THAT THERE HAS BEEN MORE OPEN EXCHANGES WITHIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS WITH VARIOUS CONSTITUENCIES.

THE MACOMB MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE HAS COLLABORATED IN REVIEWING COUNTY HIRING PRACTICES. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK PASTOR BRADLEY AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE *ALLIANCE* FOR THEIR POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE PARTICIPATION.

WE HAVE ALSO STRENGTHENED OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHAMBERS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY THROUGH A MORE OPEN POLICY OF ENGAGEMENT.

LAST YEAR, I HELD THREE REGIONAL MAYORS FORUMS WHICH WERE INTENDED TO PROMOTE GREATER ACCESS TO COUNTY GOVERNMENT. ONE ISSUE THAT WAS

RAISED REPEATEDLY WAS COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY. I WOULD LIKE OUR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS TO KNOW THAT WE WERE ~ AND WE ARE ~ LISTENING!

IN DIRECT RESPONSE, I AM PLANNING A “COMMUNICATIONS SUMMIT” TO BE HELD THIS SPRING ON MAY 25TH TO COVER THE ASPECTS THAT MOST AFFECT OUR CITIES, TOWNSHIPS AND VILLAGES. I LOOK FORWARD TO A DAY OF LEARNING AND SHARING WITH OUR MAYORS AND SUPERVISORS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS. MORE INFORMATION ON THE SUMMIT WILL BE FORTHCOMING WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

THE BLACKOUT EXPERIENCE ALSO LED DIRECTLY TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PROCEDURES AT OUR HEALTH DEPARTMENT. HEALTH DIRECTOR TOM KALKOFEN HAS IMPROVED THE PROCESS USED BY THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO REGULATE FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS SHOULD A MAJOR INTERRUPTION OF POWER OCCUR IN THE FUTURE. WE MUST REMOVE UNCERTAINTY AND PROVIDE AS MUCH DIRECTION AS POSSIBLE AT SUCH TIMES.

WHILE I KNOW THAT SOME RESTAURANT OWNERS WERE UPSET WITH THE CLOSURE ORDER LAST AUGUST, I BELIEVE DIRECTOR KALKOFEN’S ORDER WAS THE CORRECT ACTION TO TAKE GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHEN IT COMES TO PUBLIC HEALTH, WE MUST ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION.

OUR HEALTH AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPTS. HAVE ALSO WORKED AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS ON THE “REGION 2 NORTH PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR BIOTERRORISM/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS”. A \$400 THOUSAND DOLLAR STATE/FEDERAL GRANT TO IMPROVE AND SUPPORT THESE PLANNING EFFORTS HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED.

I WANT YOU AND ALL RESIDENTS OF MACOMB COUNTY TO *REST ASSURED* ~ THERE IS *NOT A SINGLE DAY ~ NOT ONE ~* WHEN YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS NOT ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN PROTECTING YOU:

- AT HOME
- AT WORK
- AT SCHOOL
- AT LEISURE

YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES ARE IMPORTANT TO US AND WE WANT TO KEEP YOU SAFE.

GLOBAL EVENTS HAVE CREATED CHALLENGES BEYOND OUR CONTROL WHICH WILL CREATE INCONVENIENCES FOR ALL OF US ~ BUT PRUDENT PLANNING AND PREPARATION ARE NOT BEYOND OUR CONTROL AND WE MUST BE TIRELESS IN THE PURSUIT OF OUR OWN *HOMELAND SECURITY*.

WE STAND READY AND WE INTEND TO BE EQUAL TO THE TASK!

WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF SAFETY AND HEALTH, LET ME ADD THAT, IN 2003, WE RECEIVED A \$2.5 MILLION DOLLAR GRANT FROM THE DEQ FOR WATER MONITORING IN THE CLINTON RIVER WATERSHED. WE ALSO RECEIVED A GRANT TO WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN CONDUCTING INVESTIGATIONS TO ELIMINATE ILLEGAL SEWAGE DISCHARGES. THESE ACTIVITIES ~ A COUNTY AND STATE PARTNERSHIP ~~ PREVENT THOUSANDS OF GALLONS OF SEWAGE FROM SPILLING INTO DRAINS, RIVERS AND, EVENTUALLY, LAKE ST. CLAIR.

WE WILL REMAIN VIGILANT. WE WILL NOT GIVE UP THE GAINS WE'VE MADE. OUR PERSISTANT AND PROGRESSIVE RESPONSE TO CLEAN UP OUR LAKE AND WATERWAYS STANDS AS A MODEL IN THE STATE ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNOR'S DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF THE GREAT LAKES, KEN DEBEAUSSAERT.

ANOTHER ISSUE OVER WHICH WE REMAIN VIGILANT IS THE WEST NILE VIRUS. IN 2002, WE HAD 114 CONFIRMED CASES OF THE VIRUS AND IN 2003 THAT NUMBER WAS REDUCED TO 2 CONFIRMED AND 2 POSSIBLE CASES. THE COUNTY'S INVESTMENT OF \$250 THOUSAND DOLLARS IN AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE LAST YEAR MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE, AND I URGE FUNDING AGAIN THIS YEAR. SEVERAL LOCAL COMMUNITIES WERE REIMBURSED FOR THEIR EFFORTS INCLUDING FREE DISTRIBUTION OF LARVACIDE TO HOMEOWNERS LIVING NEAR WATERWAYS AND LOW LANDS.

AND HERE'S ANOTHER REAL INNOVATION IN MACOMB COUNTY. WE HAVE A 15 MEMBER "*FORENSIC NURSE EXAMINER PROGRAM*" SPONSORED BY *TURNING POINT* WHICH WORKS IN COOPERATION WITH PROSECUTOR MARLINGA'S OFFICE. IT IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE COUNTRY. THIS SMALL BAND OF PROFESSIONALS WAS FEATURED IN THE

FEBRUARY EDITION OF HOOR MAGAZINE WHERE THEY WERE LAUDED FOR THEIR EVIDENCE COLLECTION METHODS WITH RAPE VICTIMS ~ AT CRIME SCENES, IN JAILS, AT HOSPITALS; WHEREVER THEY ARE NEEDED! THEY EMPLOY REFINED, HIGHLY-SPECIALIZED TECHNIQUES THAT HAVE PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLL IN PROSECUTIONS AND CONVICTIONS. DAVID WOODFORD, FORENSIC SCIENTIST AT THE MICHIGAN STATE POLICE CRIME LAB IN STERLING HEIGHTS, CALLS THEIR METHODS AND CONTRIBUTIONS, “REVOLUTIONARY” AND RESPONSIBLE FOR PUTTING PREDATORS BEHIND BARS.

I AM ALSO PLEASED THAT THE BOARD HAS PLAYED A TANGIBLE ROLE IN THIS IMPORTANT WORK BY PROVIDING FUNDING OF \$40 THOUSAND DOLLARS EACH OF THE PAST THREE YEARS.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR RENAE DIEGEL IS HERE TODAY. PLEASE STAND FOR OUR APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION.

MACOMB’S PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNT PROGRAM IS ONE MORE INNOVATION THE COUNTY HAS PIONEERED. IT IS BEING REPLICATED BY MANY COUNTIES AND CITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE. IT HAS ALSO GAINED ATTENTION IN LANSING AND IS UNDER SERIOUS CONSIDERATION FOR STATE-WIDE APPLICATION.

CURRENTLY, 22 THOUSAND SENIORS ARE ENROLLED AND RECEIVE HELP WITH THEIR PRESCRIPTION DRUG NEEDS. MORE RECENTLY, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ADDED 18 TO 59 YEAR OLDS WHO HAVE NO PRESCRIPTION INSURANCE COVERAGE TO THE PROGRAM. THESE RESIDENTS SAVE UP TO 30% ON THEIR PRESCRIPTIONS AND, SINCE THE PROGRAM’S INCEPTION IN 2000, THE TOTAL SAVINGS ARE \$14 MILLION THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS! THIS IS A WISE INVESTMENT IN THE *HEALTH* OF OUR COUNTY.

WHEN OUR INVESTMENTS ARE PRUDENT AND FOCUSED ON LONG TERM BENEFITS RATHER THAN QUICK FIXES, WE ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

KEEPING US ON THE RIGHT FINANCIAL TRACK IS OUR FINANCE DIRECTOR, DAVE DIEGEL. WHILE THE STATE OF MICHIGAN AND MANY LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT ARE STRUGGLING TO BALANCE THEIR BUDGETS THROUGH LAYOFFS AND MAJOR SERVICE CUTS,

MACOMB HAS BEEN ABLE TO CONTINUE ITS PRACTICE OF *MEASURED GROWTH* IN THE 2004 BUDGET TO MEET SERVICE NEEDS.

A TOTAL OF 36 WORKERS WERE ADDED TO THE 2004 BUDGET IN VARIOUS COUNTY DEPARTMENTS.

YOU MIGHT ASK HOW MACOMB COUNTY CAN AFFORD TO ADD STAFF WHILE OTHER COUNTIES IN THE REGION ARE MAKING SERIOUS CUT BACKS. THE ANSWER IS TWO-FOLD:

FIRST, DESPITE A GENERALLY SLOW ECONOMY AND LESS THAN IDEAL EMPLOYMENT LEVELS, MACOMB COUNTY CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE STRONG GROWTH IN ITS TAX BASE. OUR TAX BASE INCREASED 5.6 PERCENT IN 2004 AND HAS INCREASED BY AN AVERAGE OF 6.8 PERCENT PER YEAR OVER THE LAST SIX YEARS DUE MAINLY TO NEW CONSTRUCTION IN THE COUNTY.

THE SECOND REASON MACOMB COUNTY HAS BEEN ABLE TO EXPAND SERVICES WHILE EVERYONE ELSE IS CUTTING BACK IS DUE IN LARGE PART TO CONSERVATIVE BUDGETING PRACTICES. WE OPERATE THE COUNTY BUDGET MUCH LIKE YOU OPERATE YOUR FAMILY BUDGET...

- WE LIVE WITHIN OUR MEANS
- WE SAVE MONEY FOR THE INEVITABLE ECONOMIC DOWNTURNS
- WE BORROW MONEY ONLY WHEN NECESSARY AND ONLY AT COMPETITIVE RATES

THE FINANCIAL DISCIPLINE THAT WE FOLLOW TODAY HAS BEEN IN PLACE FOR MANY YEARS AND HAS ENABLED US TO ALLOW MEASURED GROWTH IN THE COUNTY BUDGET TO MEET SERVICE NEEDS THROUGH BOTH GOOD AND BAD ECONOMIES. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE MAINTAINED THE LOWEST TAX RATE OF ALL OUR NEIGHBORING COUNTIES AND THE SECOND LOWEST TAX RATE OF ALL 83 COUNTIES IN MICHIGAN.

NOW IF YOU THINK I'M EXAGGERATING, YOU NEED ONLY LOOK TO MOODY'S INVESTORS SERVICE FOR ITS STAMP OF APPROVAL ~ An AAA BOND RATING. IN ADDITION TO OUR CONSERVATIVE FISCAL POLICIES, MOODY'S LIKES OUR EASY-ACCESS LOCATION, AFFORDABLE HOUSING, CONSISTENT DEVELOPMENT AND ABOVE AVERAGE WEALTH

INDICES. LOW TAX RATES AND HIGH LEVELS OF SERVICE ARE A WINNING FORMULA, ONE OF WHICH WE CAN BE PROUD.

IN 2003, THE FIRST PHASE OF THE NEW *MARTHA T. BERRY HOSPITAL* EXPANSION AND RENOVATION WAS COMPLETED. OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, THE FACILITY WILL BE UPDATED ALLOWING RESIDENTS MORE PRIVACY AND A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE.

THE CLEMENS CENTER WAS ALSO DEDICATED LAST YEAR TO HOUSE OUR PROBATION DEPT. AND, AT *LONG LAST*, WE WILL BREAK GROUND THIS SPRING FOR A PERMANENT LOCATION FOR A NEW 42ND DISTRICT COURT IN NEW BALTIMORE.

WE HAVE ALSO RETAINED AN ARCHITECT TO DESIGN AN OFFICE BUILDING FOR OUR PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT TO BE LOCATED ON THE COUNTY CAMPUS NEAR THE VERKUILEN BLDG.

ONE MORE VERY IMPORTANT GOAL ACHIEVED IS THE COMPLETION OF OUR NEW JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER WHICH WILL BE DEDICATED NEXT MONTH.

I AM SO PLEASED AND *ACTUALLY RELIEVED* THAT THE TROUBLED CHILDREN WHO RESIDE IN OUR JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER WILL SOON HAVE AN ENVIRONMENT MORE SUITED TO THEIR NEEDS, MORE CONDUCTIVE TO THEIR REHABILITATION AND MORE REFLECTIVE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THEIR FUTURE.

AND, WHEN IT COMES TO THOSE IN NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY, WE CANNOT FORGET OUR HOMELESS. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT WE HAVE 2000 MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN NEED OF HOUSING. CAN YOU IMAGINE 2000 HOMELESS IN OUR MACOMB COMMUNITY?!

WHEN THESE NUMBERS INCLUDE INNOCENT LITTLE KIDS AND THE MENTALLY ILL WITHOUT A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS, I THINK WE HAVE TO TRY HARDER ~ WE HAVE TO DO MORE. WE MUST COMMIT TO A LONG-TERM PLAN AND GO AFTER FEDERAL DOLLARS.

WE HAVE WONDERFUL GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERS WHO WORK RELENTLESSLY FOR THE HOMELESS. IN DECEMBER, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FUNDED A POSITION TO COORDINATE VOLUNTEER EFFORTS IN SUPPORT OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION.

AS AN ADDITIONAL GESTURE OF SUPPORT BY OUR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES, I AM PROPOSING A *SPECIAL CASUAL DAY* TO BE DESIGNATED FOR THE COUNTY'S HOMELESS EACH YEAR DURING THE MONTH OF AUGUST.

IN ADDITION TO INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS, I WILL ASK THAT COUNTY OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES DONATE SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR THESE CHILDREN.

THESE KIDS ARE OUR FUTURE. WE EITHER RAISE THEM UP NOW OR WE WILL BE PULLING THEM ALONG FOR YEARS TO COME.

WITH US THIS AFTERNOON, IS THE TIRELESS CHAIRMAN OF THE *HOMELESS COALITION*, I. J. CAMPBELL. PLEASE STAND I.J. SO WE CAN ACKNOWLEDGE YOU.

AND, RIGHT HERE, LET ME SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE COUNTY'S *CASUAL DAY* PROGRAM AND OUR EMPLOYEES' GENEROSITY. CALENDAR YEAR 2003 COLLECTIONS TOTALED NEARLY \$30 THOUSAND DOLLARS. MORE THAN A DOZEN DIFFERENT CHARITIES WERE THE BENEFICIARIES, AND I WOULD LIKE TO PUBLICLY THANK THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED TODAY. THESE ARE THE SAME PEOPLE ~ WHO QUIETLY KEEP THIS COUNTY MOVING EVERYDAY. THEY ARE THE DEDICATED MACOMB COUNTY EMPLOYEES WHO OFTEN INITIATE AND SUPPORT INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS THAT CONSISTENTLY GAIN NATIONAL ATTENTION. THANK YOU TO ALL OUR HARD WORKING EMPLOYEES FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

THE LONG TERM SUCCESS OF ANY REGION DEPENDS LARGELY ON CULTURAL INTEGRITY, ECONOMIC RESPONSIBILITY AND CREATIVE VISION. AND THESE DYNAMIC ATTRIBUTES MUST BE BRIDGED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. WE MUST REACH BACK AND LOOK FORWARD. AND BELIEVE ME, BUILDING THAT BRIDGE TODAY IS A SERIOUS CHALLENGE.

EVERYONE HERE IS PAINFULLY AWARE OF JOBS GOING OVERSEAS. MACOMB COUNTY HAS NOT BEEN AND WILL NOT BE IMMUNE TO THIS EXODUS. THIS IS MORE THAN A CYCLICAL 'SHIFT' ~ IT IS INDEED A 'SEA CHANGE'; A PARADIGM SHIFT UNPRECEDENTED IN THE WAY THIS COUNTRY DOES BUSINESS. IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALREADY LOST, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 14 MILLION JOBS IN THE U.S. ARE CURRENTLY 'AT RISK' OF OUTSOURCING!

UNTIL FEDERAL TRADE LAWS LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD, MACOMB COUNTY MUST MATCH THESE DYNAMICS WITH CREATIVITY AND FLEXIBILITY.

I THINK WE CAN DO IT. WE MUST DO IT.

IN 2003, OUR *PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPT.*, DIRECTED BY STEVE CASSIN, WORKED WITH MORE THAN 60 MANUFACTURERS. THE NET RESULT WAS AN INVESTMENT OF \$55 MILLION DOLLARS IN REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY, CREATION OF 181 JOBS AND RETENTION OF 300 MORE. I REPORT THIS TO YOU NOT TO SAY THAT WE HAVE THE JOB HANDLED. WE ALL KNOW IT'S MUCH BIGGER THAN THAT. BUT I WANT YOU TO BE ASSURED THAT WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO MITIGATE THEIR PROBLEMS AND TO RETAIN AND ENHANCE BUSINESS WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

ANOTHER PROACTIVE EXAMPLE OF THAT EFFORT ~ 780 NEW AND POTENTIAL ENTREPRENEURS WERE ALSO COACHED AND SUPPORTED LAST YEAR UNDER OUR *SMALL BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM*.

REALLY GREAT NEWS MADE THE HEADLINES ON TUESDAY WHEN *THE MACOMB DAILY* REPORTED 600 NEW JOBS IN WARREN. THIS IS ESPECIALLY ENCOURAGING SINCE IT IS A MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS WHICH WAS AWARDED THE CONTRACT. IT IS BELIEVED TO BE THE LARGEST CONTRACT *EVER* IN THE AUTO INDUSTRY – POSSIBLY IN ANY U.S. INDUSTRY – WON BY A MINORITY OWNED AND OPERATED COMPANY.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BRIDGEWATER INTERIORS!

AND, STRIVING FOR MORE VITALITY IN OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS VOTED TO JOIN *AUTOMATION ALLEY* THIS PAST SUMMER. THE BOARD SAW A VALUE FOR OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY BY JOINING FORCES WITH ‘*THE ALLEY*’ TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ITS MANY RESOURCES AND BENEFITS. I AM PLEASED THAT WE TOOK THIS FORWARD-LOOKING STEP.

TO FURTHER ACQUAINT MACOMB BUSINESS OWNERS WITH *AUTOMATION ALLEY* AND THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT MEMBERSHIP AFFORDS, WE WILL BE HOLDING A BREAKFAST ON MARCH 23RD AT *MACOMB COMMUNITY COLLEGE UNIVERSITY CENTER* ON GARFIELD ROAD. PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING US.

CLOSELY RELATED, IS THE ISSUE OF JOB TRAINING AND RETRAINING. *MICHIGAN WORKS* DIRECTED BY JOHN BIERBUSSE IS A CONSORTIUM BETWEEN MACOMB AND ST. CLAIR COUNTIES. 800 RESIDENTS RECEIVED TRAINING IN 2003 AND IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT MORE THAN 1,200 WILL SEEK TRAINING IN 2004. THIS AGENCY WILL BE WORKING HAND-IN-HAND WITH THE GOVERNOR TO ASSURE MACOMB'S PLACE IN HER OVERALL PLAN TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW '*KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY*'.

HERE'S ANOTHER TELLING STATISTIC: 95.3% OF JOB SEEKERS HAVE SOUGHT RETRAINING IN OCCUPATIONS OTHER THAN MANUFACTURING. NOW THAT'S A 'SHIFT'. AND FOR YOU STATISTIC BUFFS, HOW'S THIS FOR A STUNNING FORECAST; IN SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN, 2,500 PEOPLE TURN 65 EVERY MONTH. THIS NUMBER WILL INCREASE TO 5,200 A MONTH BY 2012.

IT IS FURTHER PROJECTED THAT MACOMB'S 60+ POPULATION WILL SWELL TO NEARLY 190 THOUSAND BY 2010 AND TO MORE THAN 237 THOUSAND BY 2020! THAT WILL BE NEARLY 25% OF OUR POPULATION. CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS WILL BE A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO RECOUP SOME OF THOSE LOST MANUFACTURING JOBS; JUST THINK OF THE MARKET FOR CANES AND WALKERS ~ NOT TO MENTION THE *DEMAND* FOR VIAGRA!

AND, WHETHER OLDER OR YOUNG, IF WE HOPE TO KEEP AND ATTRACT A SKILLED WORKFORCE, WE HAVE TO BE EARNEST IN ATTENDING TO OUR INFRASTRUCTURE. WE HAVE TO SPEND THE DOLLARS TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN OUR ROADS AND BRIDGES. AND WE ARE!

IN 2003 \$57 MILLION DOLLARS WAS SPENT ON ROAD AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE WITH ANOTHER \$50 MILLION TO BE SPENT ACROSS THE COUNTY IN 2004.

IN THE YEAR 2000, THE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PARTNERED WITH THE MACOMB COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION TO PROVIDE A COMBINED \$30 MILLION DOLLARS TO UPGRADE AND REPLACE SUBSTANDARD OR CLOSED BRIDGES.

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION, UNDER *THE BRIDGE RENOVATION AND REPLACEMENT PROGRAM*, HAS COMPLETED OR BEGUN

CONSTRUCTION ON 29 BRIDGES IN 10 DIFFERENT MUNICIPALITIES THROUGH DECEMBER 2003 AT A TOTAL COST OF \$9.6 MILLION DOLLARS TO DATE. I'M HAPPY TO REPORT THAT, THIS WEEK, THE *OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE* VOTED TO FUND THE FINAL PHASE OF THIS IMPORTANT PROGRAM BY PROVIDING AN ADDITIONAL \$10 MILLION DOLLARS OF COUNTY FUNDS. AND I'M CONFIDENT THE FULL BOARD WILL CONCUR.

HERE'S SOME MORE GOOD NEWS FROM THE ROAD COMMISSION. IT IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF "*GLITS*" ("*THE GREAT LAKES INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM*"). THIS SYSTEM WILL INTRODUCE A NEW TRAFFIC OPERATION CENTER TO INTEGRATE RADIO-COMPONENT TRAFFIC SIGNALS WITH VISUAL MONITORING. THIS WILL ENABLE SIGNAL TIMING CHANGES TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW. IT WILL ALSO MITIGATE ACCIDENTS AND INCREASE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIME.

WHILE REPORTING ON OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DID NOT RAISE THE ISSUE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IT IS IMPERATIVE TO OUR LONG TERM ECONOMIC FUTURE.

DESPITE A MINOR LEGAL SETBACK, DARTA CONTINUES TO OPERATE AND IS CURRENTLY SEEKING STATE AND FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION IN THE REGION. AS CHAIRWOMAN OF *THE REGIONAL TRANSIT COORDINATING COUNCIL*, I STAND WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF OAKLAND AND WAYNE COUNTIES AND THE CITY OF DETROIT IN ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES.

MOVING FROM ROADS TO SIDEWALKS, OUR WALKERS AND BIKERS ARE ALSO A PART OF THE OVERALL EQUATION. LAST YEAR I REPORTED ON THE *MACOMB ORCHARD TRAIL* AND AN UPDATE IS IN ORDER. YOU MAY RECALL THAT THE TRAIL TRAVERSES A 23.5 MILE LONG ABANDONED RAILBED RUNNING NORTHEAST FROM 24 MILE ROAD AND DEQUINDRE TO THE CITY OF RICHMOND. I AM PLEASED TO TELL YOU THAT THE FUNDING IS NOW IN PLACE TO DEVELOP THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE TRAIL. PREVIOUS GRANTS, ALONG WITH MATCH-MONEY FROM THE COUNTY AND OUR PARTNERS, THE CITY OF RICHMOND, SHELBY AND WASHINGTON TWPS., AS WELL AS THE *HURON CLINTON METRO AUTHORITY* HAVE ENABLED US

TO PROCEED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE TRAIL. THIS INITIAL PHASE WILL RUN FROM 24 MILE ROAD IN SHELBY TOWNSHIP TO 29 MILE ROAD IN WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP. COMPLETION OF THIS FIRST PHASE IS ANTICIPATED IN LATE SPRING WITH A RIBBON-CUTTING IN JUNE.

I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPPORT OF CONGRESSWOMAN CANDICE MILLER WHO SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCED FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO INCLUDE FUNDING OF \$3.7 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE *MACOMB ORCHARD TRAIL*. THIS WAS A GREAT HELP AND I THANK CANDICE VERY MUCH.

THE REALLY EXCITING ASPECT OF THE *MACOMB ORCHARD TRAIL* IS THE GOAL OF CONNECTING TO OTHER EXISTING TRAILS IN WAYNE, OAKLAND AND ST. CLAIR COUNTIES.

PLEASE SPEND A LITTLE TIME TODAY LOOKING AT THE DISPLAYS CREATED BY OUR PLANNING DEPT. THESE PICTURES ARE, INDEED, *WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS*.

THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT IS ALSO DEVELOPING A COUNTY-WIDE ‘*TRAILWAYS MASTER PLAN*’ WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED THIS SPRING. IT WILL BE THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN. THE GOAL OF THE PLAN IS TO ULTIMATELY CONNECT RICHMOND TO THE NORTH, WARREN TO THE SOUTH, CLINTON RIVER TRAIL AT THE OAKLAND BORDER TO THE WEST AND LAKE ST. CLAIR TO THE EAST.

EVENTUALLY, OUR RESIDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO HIKE AND BIKE THE ENTIRE WIDTH AND BREADTH OF OUR BEAUTIFUL COUNTY. IN FACT, AMBITIOUS PLANS ON THE DRAWING BOARD EVEN EXPLORE CONNECTING TRAILS STATE-WIDE ONE DAY.

IN A SOCIETY WHERE STRESS ABOUNDS, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE RESPOND IN A POSITIVE WAY TO THE NEED FOR HEALTHY LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES. AND, OF COURSE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE TRAIL SYSTEMS ALSO PRESERVES GREENSPACE FOR OUR ENJOYMENT AND THE ENJOYMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.

IT IS GOOD PUBLIC POLICY

OR ~ ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING IT ~

IT IS GOOD HEALTH INSURANCE!

IN ORDER TO CONFRONT THE MANY DIVERSE CHALLENGES FACING OUR COUNTY, IN 2003 I BROUGHT TOGETHER A STRATEGIC VISIONING TASK FORCE TO TAKE A LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE WANT TO GO AS A COUNTY.

I WANT TO THANK PRESIDENT AL LORENZO OF MACOMB COMMUNITY COLLEGE WHO CHAIRED THE TASK FORCE, AS WELL AS HIS COLLEAGUES DR. JIM JACOBS AND DR. BARRY STERN WHO ALL GAVE SO GENEROUSLY OF THEIR TIME AND TALENTS TO ADVANCE THE WORK OF THIS GROUP. PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

IN FACT, IF THERE ARE MORE TASK FORCE MEMBERS HERE TODAY, WILL YOU, TOO, PLEASE STAND AND BE ACKNOWLEDGED.

THIS BROAD CROSS SECTION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS AS WELL AS OUR PLANNING DEPT. PARTICIPATED OVER SEVERAL MONTHS TO ASSESS THE COUNTY'S STANDING AND OFFER IDEAS FOR ITS FUTURE DIRECTION.

THE FINAL REPORT WAS PRESENTED AND FAVORABLY RECEIVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS LAST MONTH. THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE WERE DIRECTED TO THE DEPT. OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CREATION OF AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.

THE DYNAMICS OF THIS GROUP WERE MOST UNUSUAL AND THAT'S GOOD NEWS FOR US! THERE WAS SO MUCH INTEREST AND ENERGY GENERATED THAT THE MEMBERS ACTUALLY GROANED WHEN OUR LAST MEETING WAS ANNOUNCED. *HOW'S THAT FOR COMMUNITY SPIRIT?!*

A TRANSITION TEAM IS LOOKING AT THE POSSIBILITY OF PROPOSING A MORE PERMANENT CIVIC-COUNTY COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY. THEIR SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE BOARD IN THE MONTHS TO COME.

ALSO EMERGING FROM THE TASK FORCE IS THE *"THE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT THE DETROIT ARSENAL AND SELFRIDGE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE."* THE COMMITTEE WAS FORMED TO PREVENT THE CLOSURE OF EITHER TACOM/TARDEC OR

SELFRIDGE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE. WE ALL KNOW THAT SELFRIDGE IS A MAJOR COMPONENT OF OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE AND I HAVE HEARD THAT THE VAN DYKE CORRIDOR IS REFERRED TO AS THE “ARSENAL OF FREEDOM”. THESE ARE HUGE ASSETS IN OUR COUNTY AND HOT INCUBATORS OF JOBS AND REVENUE.

GIVEN THE BUSINESS CLOSINGS AND JOB LOSSES IN THE COUNTY AND ACROSS THE STATE, WE SIMPLY CANNOT STAND BY AND WATCH EITHER OF THESE FACILITIES CLOSE. THE IMPACT WOULD BE DEVASTATING. I’M PLEASED TO SAY THAT, WHEN ASKED, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS *QUICKLY* STEPPED UP AND AUTHORIZED \$50 THOUSAND DOLLARS TO GET THIS INITIATIVE UNDERWAY.

SPEAKING OF UNITY AND WORKING TOGETHER, I HAVE HAD *SEVERAL* MEETINGS THIS PAST YEAR WITH MY BIG FOUR COLLEAGUES REGARDING REGIONAL ISSUES. ACTUALLY, WE MAY EVEN HAVE SET A RECORD FOR “*GETTING TOGETHER*”! ISSUES HAVE RANGED FROM JOINT PURCHASING, REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION, LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION SHARING, HEALTH CARE, COBO HALL, SUPER BOWL XL AND MORE. WHILE WE MAY BE DIFFERENT COUNTIES, WE CANNOT FORGET THAT WE ARE ONE REGION. *GETTING TOGETHER AND PULLING TOGETHER* MEANS SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN CAN BE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS!

I BELIEVE RECENT ACTIONS, SOME THAT I’VE MENTIONED TODAY, REFLECT A BROADER WILLINGNESS TO PARTNER AND PARTICIPATE BEYOND OUR BORDERS. PROVINCIAL THINKING AND PROVINCIAL PLANNING IS PART OF THE PAST.

IT WILL NOT WORK~ IT CANNOT WORK ~ IN THE FUTURE. WE INDULGE IN OLD HABITS AT OUR OWN PERIL. WHEN CHILDREN BORN TODAY, MARCH 11, 2004, CELEBRATE THEIR 20TH BIRTHDAY ~ HOPEFULLY AT A CAFÉ ON MAIN STREET IN MT. CLEMENS ~ THEY MAY LOOK AROUND AND ASK HOW MACOMB COUNTY CAME TO BE WHAT IT IS ~ OR WILL BE IN ~ 2024. THEY WILL BE SEEING WHAT WE, THEIR *ANCESTORS*, CREATED:

**THE INFRASTRUCTURE WE BUILT*

**THE ENVIRONMENT WE PROTECTED*

***THE CULTURE WE NURTURED**

HOPEFULLY, WE WILL GIVE THEM REASON TO PRAISE OUR DECISIONS AND OUR FORESIGHT. THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WILL HAVE NEW MEMBERS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF COMMISSIONER SLINDE, OF COURSE ~ BUT OUR LEGACY WILL STAND. AND TO ASSURE THAT THE RECORD OF OUR HISTORY WILL BE PROTECTED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, THE BOARD CREATED A NINE MEMBER *MACOMB COUNTY HISTORIC COMMISSION* THIS PAST YEAR. BY HONORING OUR PAST WE HELP TO ENSURE OUR FUTURE.

AS WE GROW A DIVERSE COUNTY OF HISTORIC TOWNS AND COOL CITIES, OUR RESIDENTS HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT MORE THAN DAY-TO-DAY GOVERNANCE. THAT'S A GIVEN. BUT IT'S OUR VISION TODAY THAT WILL PROVIDE THE LEGACY OF TOMORROW.

ABE LINCOLN ONCE COMMENTED THAT THE BEST THING ABOUT THE FUTURE IS THAT IT COMES ONE DAY AT A TIME . WELL, MAYBE THAT'S HOW IT WORKED IN ABE'S DAY BUT I'M NOT SO SURE THAT'S THE CASE TODAY. THERE HAVE BEEN MORE THAN A FEW TIMES IN THE PAST YEAR THAT IT SEEMED LIKE AT LEAST A WEEK ~ MAYBE EVEN A MONTH ~ OF THE FUTURE ~ LANDED ON MY DESK IN A SINGLE DAY.

THERE ARE UNPRECEDENTED DECISIONS TO MAKE ~ COMPETING PRIORITIES TO SET ~ POLITICAL COMPROMISES TO REACH ~ IN ORDER TO GIVE TODAY'S CHILDREN EVERY REASON ~ NOT ONLY TO GROW UP IN MACOMB COUNTY ~ BUT TO CHOOSE TO STAY AND RAISE, THEIR KIDS, THE NEXT GENERATION, RIGHT HERE IN MACOMB COUNTY.

AS I SEE IT, OUR CHARGE AS ELECTED LEADERS IS TO WELCOME TOMORROW BY EMBRACING PRUDENT CHANGE TODAY. AND IT IS WITH OUR FUTURE IN MIND THAT I RAISE A SENSITIVE ISSUE; THE ISSUE OF A COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOR MACOMB COUNTY.

I OFFER MY INSIGHTS AS A RESIDENT FOR 32 YEARS, A COMMISSIONER FOR 11 AND AS CHAIR OF THE BOARD FOR MORE THAN A YEAR. SO I HOPE YOU WILL RECEIVE MY REMARKS NOT AS A POLITICAL STATEMENT BUT RATHER AS MY PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL OPINION.

I AM CONVINCED THAT IT IS NOT A CASE OF IF MACOMB COUNTY WILL HAVE AN ELECTED EXECUTIVE BUT WHEN. AND LET ME MAKE A DISTINCTION AT THE OUTSET; I SPEAK OF AN *EXECUTIVE*, A CEO ELECTED BY AND ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE ~ NOT ~ AN ADMINISTRATOR HIRED BY AND ACCOUNTABLE TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS.

I DO NOT RAISE THIS ISSUE TODAY BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT MACOMB COUNTY IS 'BROKEN'. IT IS NOT. I DO NOT RAISE THIS ISSUE TODAY BECAUSE I THINK THAT CHANGE MUST COME TOMORROW. IT SHOULD NOT.

HOWEVER, MY PURPOSE IS TO BEGIN A POLITICAL AND PUBLIC DIALOGUE, AN '*INFORMED AND REASONED DEBATE*' ~ ~ ~ AMONG THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS AND RESIDENTS. AND, OF COURSE, WITH THE *OBJECTIVE PARTICIPATION* OF THE MEDIA.

THIS *INFORMAL PROCESS* MUST NOT BE HURRIED AND THE *FORMAL LEGAL PROCESS* CANNOT BE HURRIED. IT ALL TAKES TIME. AND, I BELIEVE, IT IS TIME TO BEGIN.

TODAY OUR POPULATION STANDS AT 820 THOUSAND. WHEN THOSE BABIES I SPOKE OF EARLIER REACH MAJORITY, OUR POPULATION WILL BE NEARING THE ONE MILLION MARK. WHILE THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A PLACE FOR THE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, AT SOME POINT, THE NEED FOR THIS CHANGE IN GOVERNANCE ~ THE ELECTION OF ONE STRONG LEADER ~ ACCOUNTABLE TO THE VOTERS ~ WILL BECOME CRITICAL TO OUR FUTURE.

I SURELY DO NOT INTEND TO DEBATE DETAILS TODAY BUT LET ME ASK YOU TO CONSIDER THIS: IN THE PAST 20 YEARS, MACOMB COUNTY HAS HAD 8 DIFFERENT BOARD CHAIRS ~ THAT AVERAGES OUT TO TERMS OF LESS THAN 2.5 YEARS. WE HAVE NEARLY 3,000 EMPLOYEES. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE A POPULATION WHICH RANKS 3RD LARGEST IN THE STATE. AND, WHEN WE REACH THE ONE MILLION MARK, OUR COUNTY WILL BE AS POPULATED AS THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND IS TODAY. CAN YOU IMAGINE RUNNING A COMPANY WITH A BUDGET OF \$400 MILLION DOLLARS, OF SIMILAR SIZE AND GEOGRAPHY, WITH A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP EVERY TWO YEARS?

IT IS UNWISE TO WAIT FOR THE SYSTEM TO BREAK ~ OUR CONSTITUENTS EXPECT AND DESERVE NO LESS THAN *PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT*. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO IGNORE THE BROAD RAMIFICATIONS OF A GLOBAL MARKET PLACE. WE CANNOT IGNORE TRENDS AND FORECASTS THAT PREDICT AN EVEN GREATER TRANSFORMATION IN OUR NEAR TERM AND LONG TERM FUTURE.

I BELIEVE, WHEN THE ELECTORATE BECOMES *INFORMED* AND *EDUCATED* THROUGH MORE THAN JUST A SERIES OF SOUND BITES, THEY WILL NOT REJECT THE IDEA OUT-OF-HAND. THEY WILL *INTELLIGENTLY* WEIGH THE PROS AND CONS. THEY WILL COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT BOTH FORMS OF GOVERNANCE HAVE INHERENT *BENEFITS* AND *CONSEQUENCES* AND AS OUR POPULATION GROWS, SO TOO GROW THE CONSEQUENCES.

FULLY EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP, BY DEFINITION, MUST HAVE BOTH ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUITY.

WE LIVE IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES ~ CHALLENGES ABOUND ~ BUT THERE IS *NO CHALLENGE* WITHOUT ITS *OPPORTUNITY*. THEY ARE OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE SAME COIN.

THE FACT THAT MACOMB COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS NOT BROKEN IS THE VERY REASON WE SHOULD NOT SQUANDER THE TIME WE HAVE TO PRAGMATICALLY APPROACH CHANGE.

I HAVE RAISED SERIOUS ISSUES TODAY AND I INVITE YOU TO JOIN ME IN DISCOVERING AND PURSUING THE OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN EACH.

THANK YOU FOR COMING AND FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION. MY HUSBAND TOLD ME HE WOULDN'T COME THIS YEAR IF I TALKED AS LONG AS LAST YEAR.

DARYL ARE YOU STILL HERE??

LONG SPEECHES ARE A CHALLENGE FOR SPEAKER AND AUDIENCE ALIKE. BUT THERE IS JUST A LOT GOING ON IN MACOMB COUNTY AND THAT'S GOOD NEWS! AND *EVERY ISSUE* ADDRESSED TODAY IS ONE I FELT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO YOU. AFTER ALL, YOU WOULD NOT BE HERE IF MACOMB COUNTY WERE NOT IMPORTANT TO YOU.

IN CLOSING, LET ME ASK YOU TWO SIMPLE QUESTIONS:

**WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF
YOU KNEW YOU COULD NOT FAIL?**

**WHAT WOULD WE DO ~
WHAT COULD WE DO ~ TOGETHER ~ IF
WE KNEW WE COULD NOT FAIL?**

LET US HAVE THE COURAGE TO SUCCEED!

THANK YOU.